

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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R 272210Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 450

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1047

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLAB PINS ES

SUBJ: BOMBING OF UCS HEADQUARTERS

REF: STATE 47641

1. EMBASSY CONFIRMS THAT DURING WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY 21-22, TWO EXPLOSIVE DEVICES WERE SET OFF ON UCS SITES. THE FIRST IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, WAS PLACED AT THE BASE OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE UCS NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN SANTA TECLA. DAMAGE WAS CONFINED TO BROKEN WINDOWS AND AN EIGHTEEN INCH WIDE, SIX INCH DEEP HOLE IN THE CEMENT. A POLOFF VISITED THE OFFICE THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY AND, BEYOND THIS MINOR PHYSICAL DAMAGE, NOTICED NO INTERRUPTION TO UCS OPERATIONS. A SECOND DEVICE WENT OFF THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT THE SANTA ANA REGIONAL OFFICE WITH SIMILAR PROPERTY DAMAGE, NO PERSONAL INJURIES.

2. ASKED WHO HE FELT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTION, ROBERTO "TITO" CASTRO, UCS TECHNICAL ADVISOR, TOLD THE POLOFF THAT THERE WERE THREE POSSIBILITIES -ULTRARIGHTISTS REPRESENTING THE LANDOWNERS; AGENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT; OR SOMEONE AFFILIATED WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF EL SALVADOR (PCES). THE FIRST, ULTRA-RIGHTISTS, WERE DISMISSED PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE, AS CASTRO PUT IT, "THOSE GUYS DON'T FOOL AROUND WITH THREATS, WHEN THEY'RE MAD AT YOU, THEY HIRE SOMEONE TO KILL YOU." THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXONERATED BECAUSE "IT HAS NO REASON TO WISH US HARM, OR JEOPARDIZE OUR FRIENDLY RELATION, JUST BEFORE THE ELECTIONS."

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TITO CASTO IS CONVINCED THE BOMBING WRE THE WORK OF THE PCES.

HE SAID THE ACT ITSELF, AND UNATTRIBUTED BOMB NTO MEANT TO KILL BUT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION AND SOW CONFUSION, WAS THE TYPICAL POLITICAL ACT OF THE PCES. HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS MOTIVE APLENTY, SINCE THE UCS AND THE PCES ARE RIVALS IN THE SAME BUSINESS, ORGANIZING CAMPESINOS. HE CLAIMED THE COMMUNISTS ARE INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED AND ANGRY WITH THE UCS FOR ITS GREATER SUCCESS, AS WELL AS ITS UNWILLINGNESS TO FORM A UNITED FRONT IN THE CAMPO AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. CASTRO'S FIRM CONVICTION IS THAT THE BOMBINGS WERE THE WORK OF THE PCES.

3. CASTRO ENDED BY SAYING ALL UCS PROPERTY IS NOW BEING GUARDED AROUND-THE-CLOCK BY ARMED VOLUNTEERS. HE SAID THEY WOULD WELCOME ANOTHER ATTEMPT SO THAT THEY COULD CATCH SOMEONE IN THE ACT. THE INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED TO THE POLICE WITH NO RESULTS SO FAR. THE UCS ITSELF ANNOUNCED IT WOULD USE ITS OWN RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER.
CAMPBELL

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